EXHIBIT A

US006594691B1

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McCollum et al.

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(45) **Date of Patent: Jul. 15, 2003**

(54) **METHOD AND SYSTEM FOR ADDING FUNCTION TO A WEB PAGE**

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(21) Appl. No.: **09/429,357**

(22) Filed: **Oct. 28, 1999**

(51) **Int. Cl.**[7] **G06F 15/16**
(52) **U.S. Cl.** **709/218**; 709/219
(58) **Field of Search** 709/219, 203, 709/224, 225, 227, 281, 310, 217

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* cited by examiner

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Assistant Examiner—Gregory Clinton
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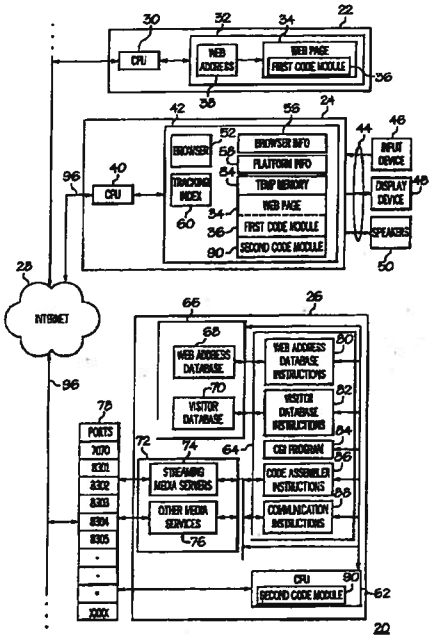
(57) **ABSTRACT**

A computer network (20) includes a first processor (22) for maintaining a Web page (34) having an embedded first code module (36) and accessible through a Web address (38). A second processor (24) supports a Web browser (52) for downloading the Web page (34) and executing the first code module (36). When executed, the first code module (36) issues a first command (93) to retrieve a second code module (90) from a server system (26). The server system (26) includes a database (68) having a service response (162, 176, 186) associated with the Web address (38). A processor (62) assembles the second code module (90) having the service response (162, 176, 186). When the second code module is retrieved, the first code module (36) issues a second command (106) to initiate execution of the second code module (90) to provide added function to the Web page (34).

28 Claims, 11 Drawing Sheets



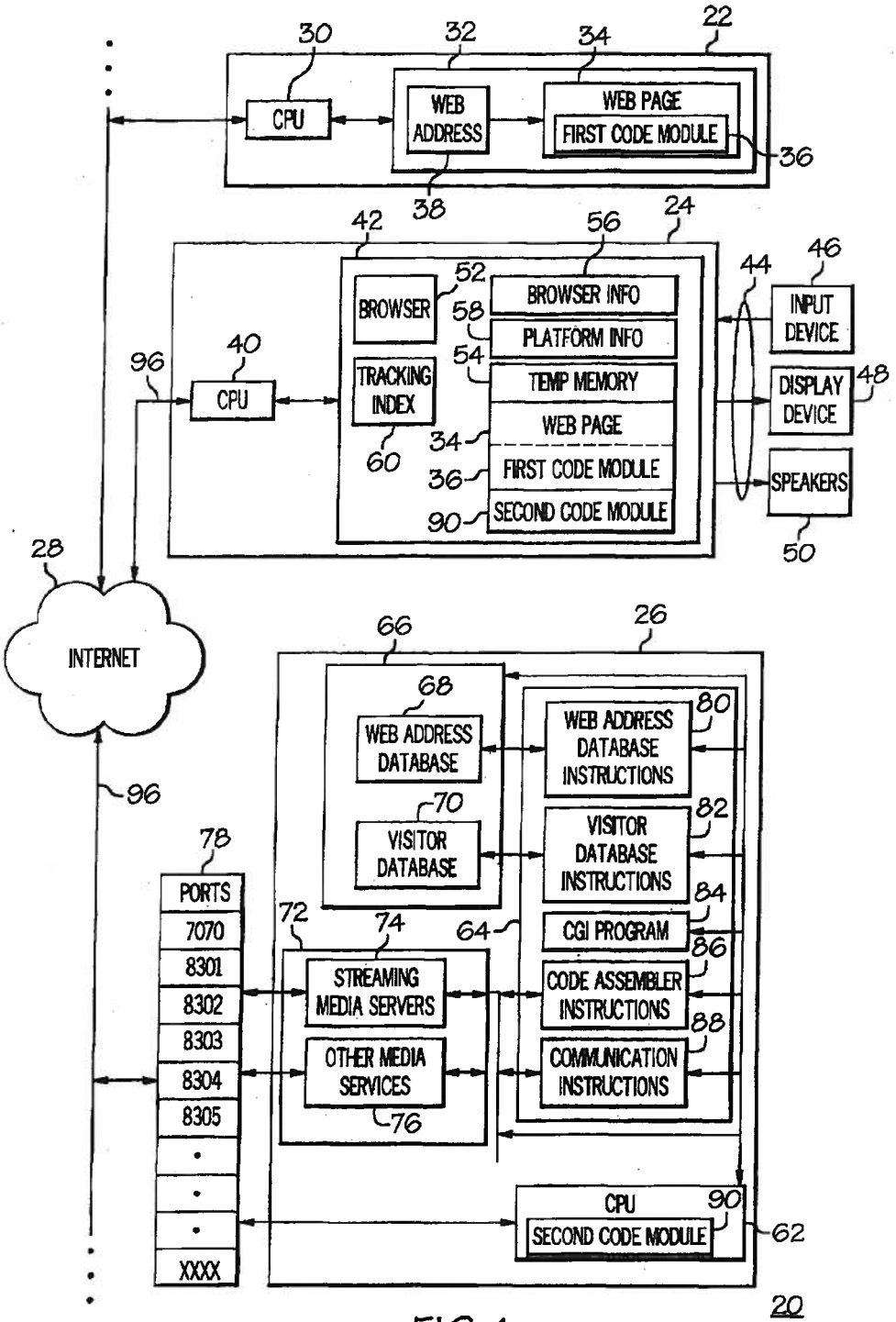

22
30
32
34
CPU
WEB ADDRESS
WEB PAGE
FIRST CODE MODULE
36
38
42
56
24
52
BROWSER
BROWSER INFO
58
PLATFORM INFO
54
TEMP MEMORY
WEB PAGE
34
FIRST CODE MODULE
36
SECOND CODE MODULE
90
44
46
INPUT DEVICE
DISPLAY DEVICE
48
SPEAKERS
50
40
96
CPU
TRACKING INDEX
60
28
INTERNET
96
66
26
68
WEB ADDRESS DATABASE
70
VISITOR DATABASE
80
WEB ADDRESS DATABASE INSTRUCTIONS
82
VISITOR DATABASE INSTRUCTIONS
84
CGI PROGRAM
86
CODE ASSEMBLER INSTRUCTIONS
88
COMMUNICATION INSTRUCTIONS
64
78
PORTS
7070
8301
8302
8303
8304
8305
XXXX
72
74
STREAMING MEDIA SERVERS
OTHER MEDIA SERVICES
76
CPU
90
SECOND CODE MODULE
62
20

FIG. 1

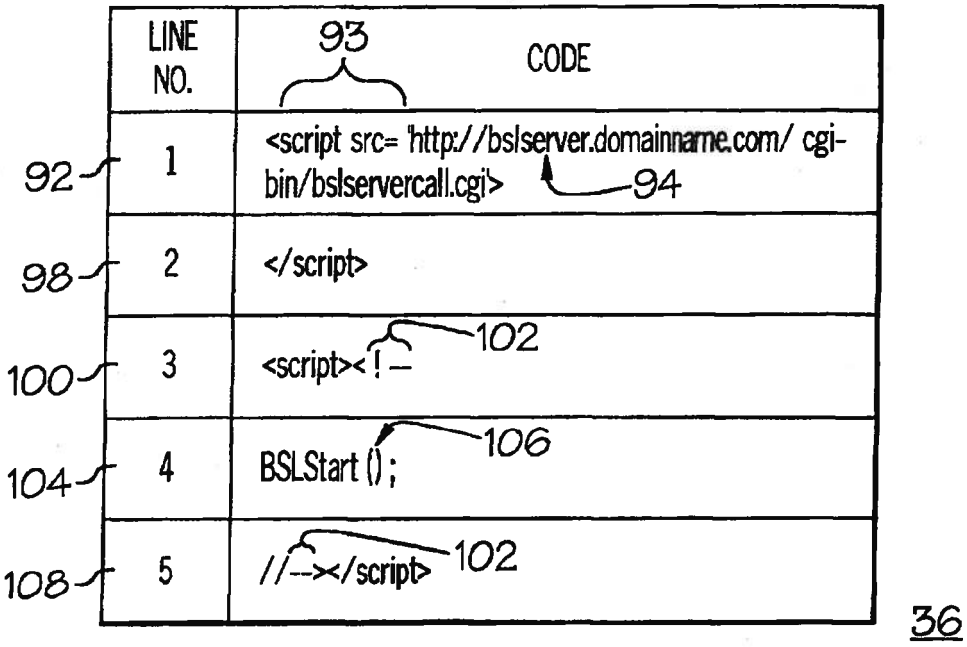

LINE NO.
93
CODE
92
1
<script src= 'http://bslserver.domainname.com/ cgi-bin/bslservercall.cgi'>
94
98
2
</script>
100
3
<script><!--
102
104
4
BSLStart ();
106
108
5
//--></script>
102
36

FIG. 2

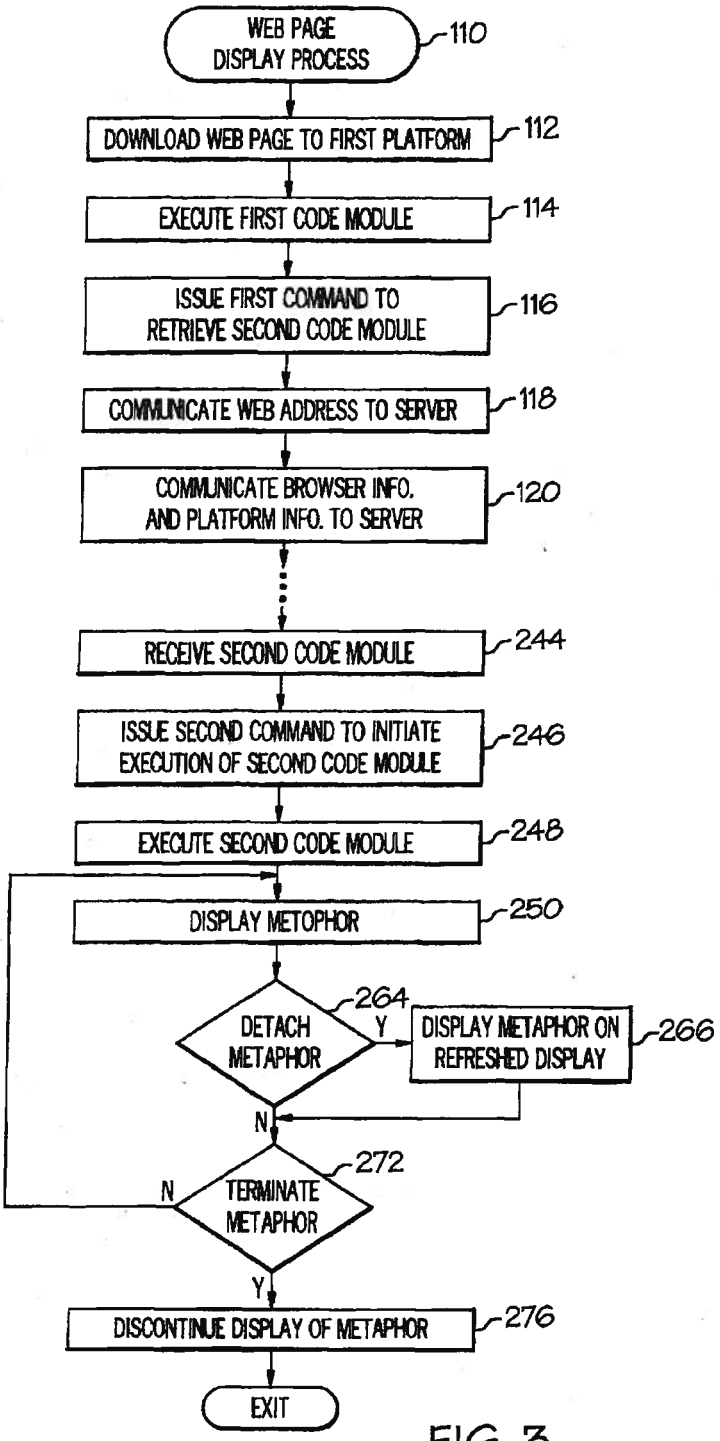

WEB PAGE DISPLAY PROCESS
110
DOWNLOAD WEB PAGE TO FIRST PLATFORM
112
EXECUTE FIRST CODE MODULE
114
ISSUE FIRST COMMAND TO RETRIEVE SECOND CODE MODULE
116
COMMUNICATE WEB ADDRESS TO SERVER
118
COMMUNICATE BROWSER INFO. AND PLATFORM INFO. TO SERVER
120
RECEIVE SECOND CODE MODULE
244
ISSUE SECOND COMMAND TO INITIATE EXECUTION OF SECOND CODE MODULE
246
EXECUTE SECOND CODE MODULE
248
DISPLAY METOPHOR
250
DETACH METAPHOR
264
Y
DISPLAY METAPHOR ON REFRESHED DISPLAY
266
N
TERMINATE METAPHOR
272
N
Y
DISCONTINUE DISPLAY OF METAPHOR
276
EXIT

FIG. 3

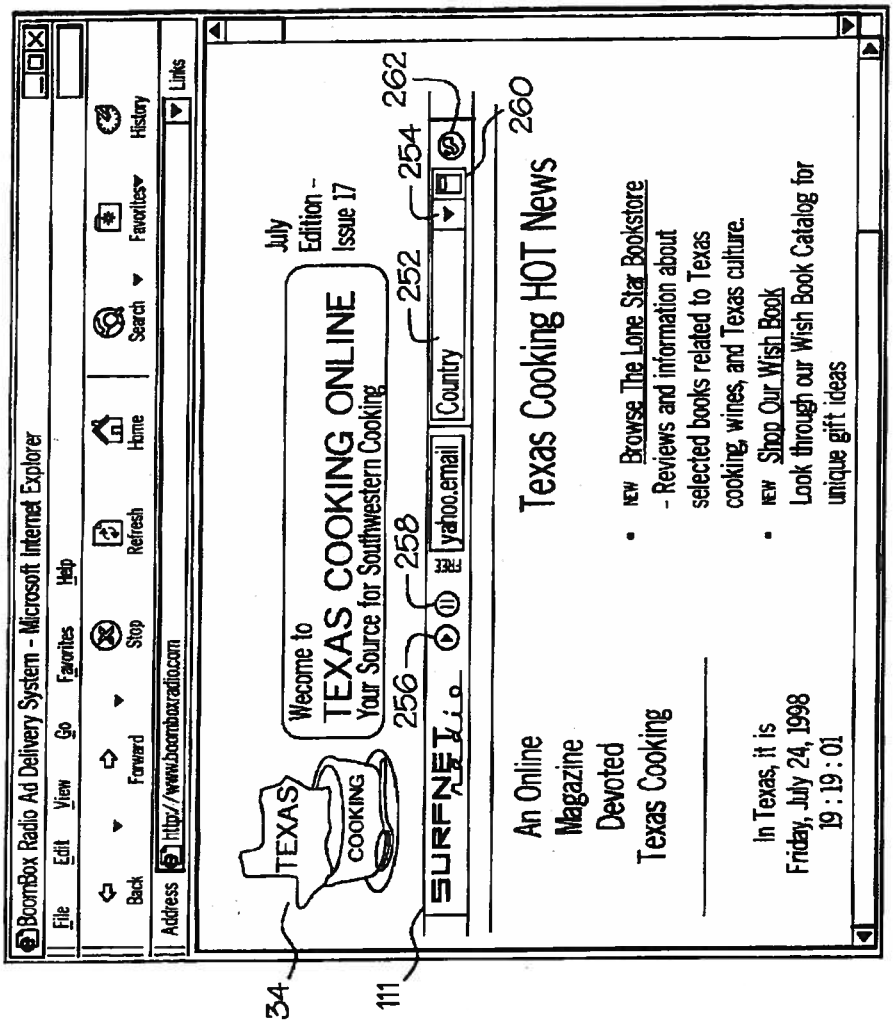

BoomBox Radio Ad Delivery System - Microsoft Internet Explorer
File Edit View Go Favorites Help
Back Forward Stop Refresh Home Search Favorites History
Address http://www.boomboxradio.com
Links
TEXAS
COOKING
Wecome to
TEXAS COOKING ONLINE
Your Source for Southwestern Cooking
July
Edition -
Issue 17
SURFNET
yahoo.email
Country
Texas Cooking HOT News
An Online
Magazine
Devoted
Texas Cooking
In Texas, it is
Friday, July 24, 1998
19 : 19 : 01
NEW Browse The Lone Star Bookstore
- Reviews and information about
selected books related to Texas
cooking, wines, and Texas culture.
NEW Shop Our Wish Book
Look through our Wish Book Catalog for
unique gift ideas
34
111
256
258
252
254
262
260

FIG. 4

42

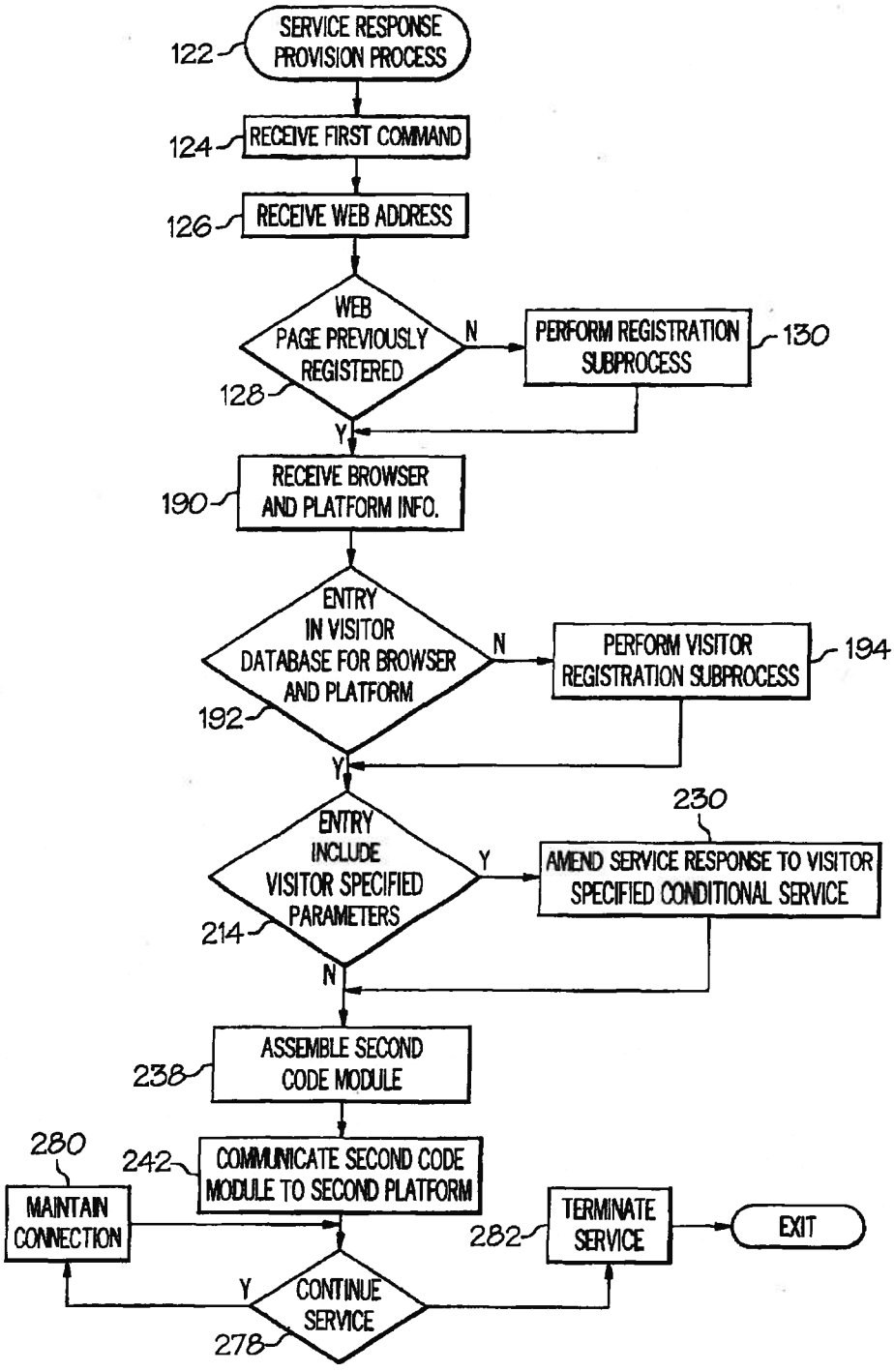

122
SERVICE RESPONSE PROVISION PROCESS
124
RECEIVE FIRST COMMAND
126
RECEIVE WEB ADDRESS
128
WEB PAGE PREVIOUSLY REGISTERED
N
PERFORM REGISTRATION SUBPROCESS
130
Y
190
RECEIVE BROWSER AND PLATFORM INFO.
192
ENTRY IN VISITOR DATABASE FOR BROWSER AND PLATFORM
N
PERFORM VISITOR REGISTRATION SUBPROCESS
194
Y
230
214
ENTRY INCLUDE VISITOR SPECIFIED PARAMETERS
Y
AMEND SERVICE RESPONSE TO VISITOR SPECIFIED CONDITIONAL SERVICE
N
238
ASSEMBLE SECOND CODE MODULE
280
242
COMMUNICATE SECOND CODE MODULE TO SECOND PLATFORM
MAINTAIN CONNECTION
282
TERMINATE SERVICE
EXIT
Y
278
CONTINUE SERVICE

FIG. 5

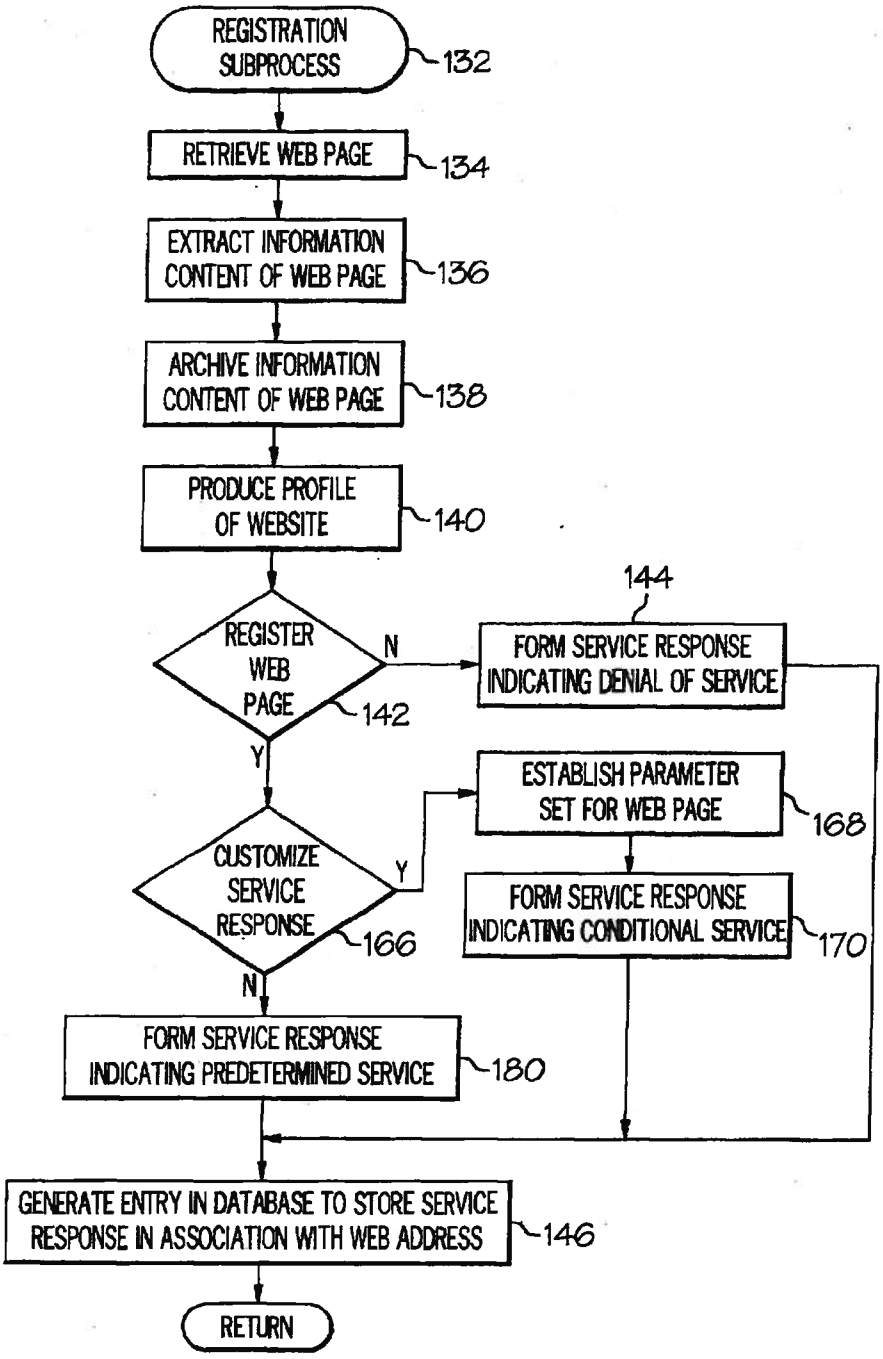

REGISTRATION SUBPROCESS
132
RETRIEVE WEB PAGE
134
EXTRACT INFORMATION CONTENT OF WEB PAGE
136
ARCHIVE INFORMATION CONTENT OF WEB PAGE
138
PRODUCE PROFILE OF WEBSITE
140
144
REGISTER WEB PAGE
142
N
FORM SERVICE RESPONSE INDICATING DENIAL OF SERVICE
Y
ESTABLISH PARAMETER SET FOR WEB PAGE
168
CUSTOMIZE SERVICE RESPONSE
166
Y
FORM SERVICE RESPONSE INDICATING CONDITIONAL SERVICE
170
N
FORM SERVICE RESPONSE INDICATING PREDETERMINED SERVICE
180
GENERATE ENTRY IN DATABASE TO STORE SERVICE RESPONSE IN ASSOCIATION WITH WEB ADDRESS
146
RETURN

FIG. 6

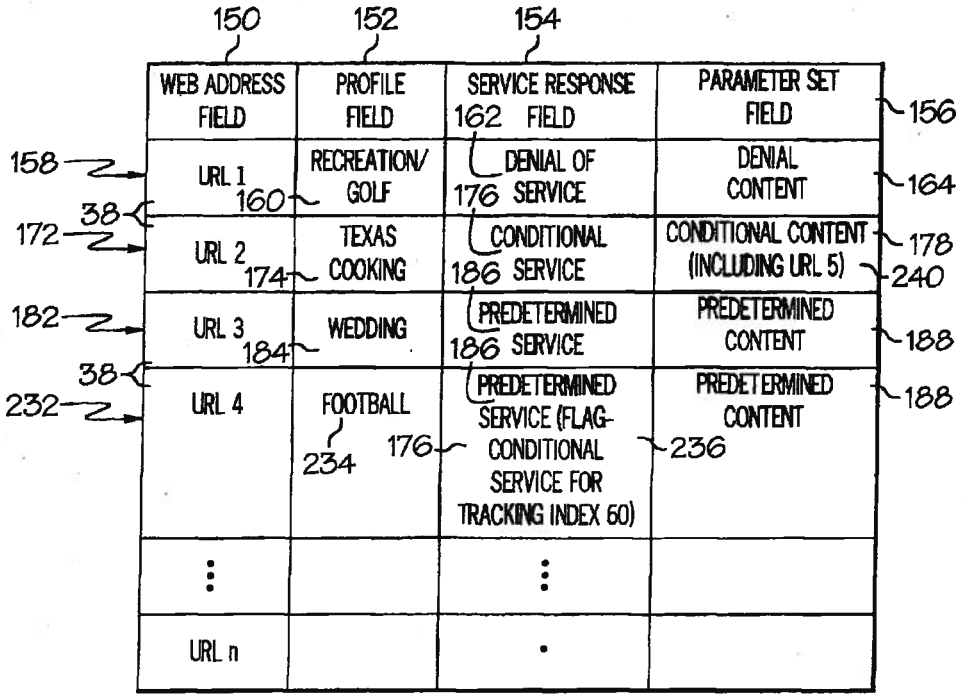

150
152
154
WEB ADDRESS FIELD
PROFILE FIELD
SERVICE RESPONSE FIELD
162
PARAMETER SET FIELD
156
158
URL 1
160
RECREATION/ GOLF
DENIAL OF SERVICE
176
DENIAL CONTENT
164
38
172
URL 2
174
TEXAS COOKING
CONDITIONAL SERVICE
186
CONDITIONAL CONTENT (INCLUDING URL 5)
178
240
182
URL 3
184
WEDDING
PREDETERMINED SERVICE
186
PREDETERMINED CONTENT
188
38
232
URL 4
FOOTBALL
234
176
PREDETERMINED SERVICE (FLAG-CONDITIONAL SERVICE FOR TRACKING INDEX 60)
236
PREDETERMINED CONTENT
188
URL n
68

FIG. 7

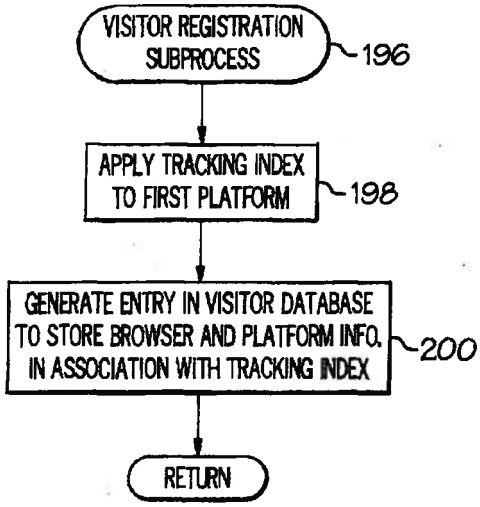

VISITOR REGISTRATION SUBPROCESS
196
APPLY TRACKING INDEX TO FIRST PLATFORM
198
GENERATE ENTRY IN VISITOR DATABASE TO STORE BROWSER AND PLATFORM INFO. IN ASSOCIATION WITH TRACKING INDEX
200
RETURN

FIG. 8

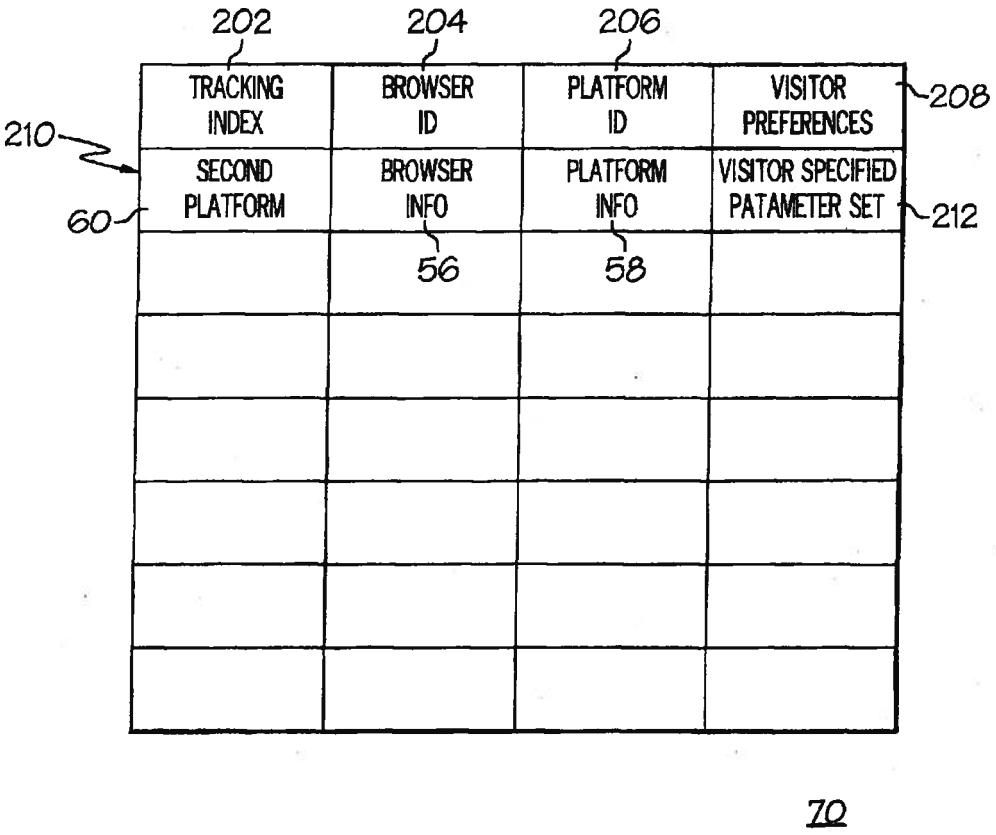

202
204
206
TRACKING INDEX
BROWSER ID
PLATFORM ID
VISITOR PREFERENCES
208
210
SECOND PLATFORM
BROWSER INFO
PLATFORM INFO
VISITOR SPECIFIED PATAMETER SET
212
60
56
58
70

FIG. 9

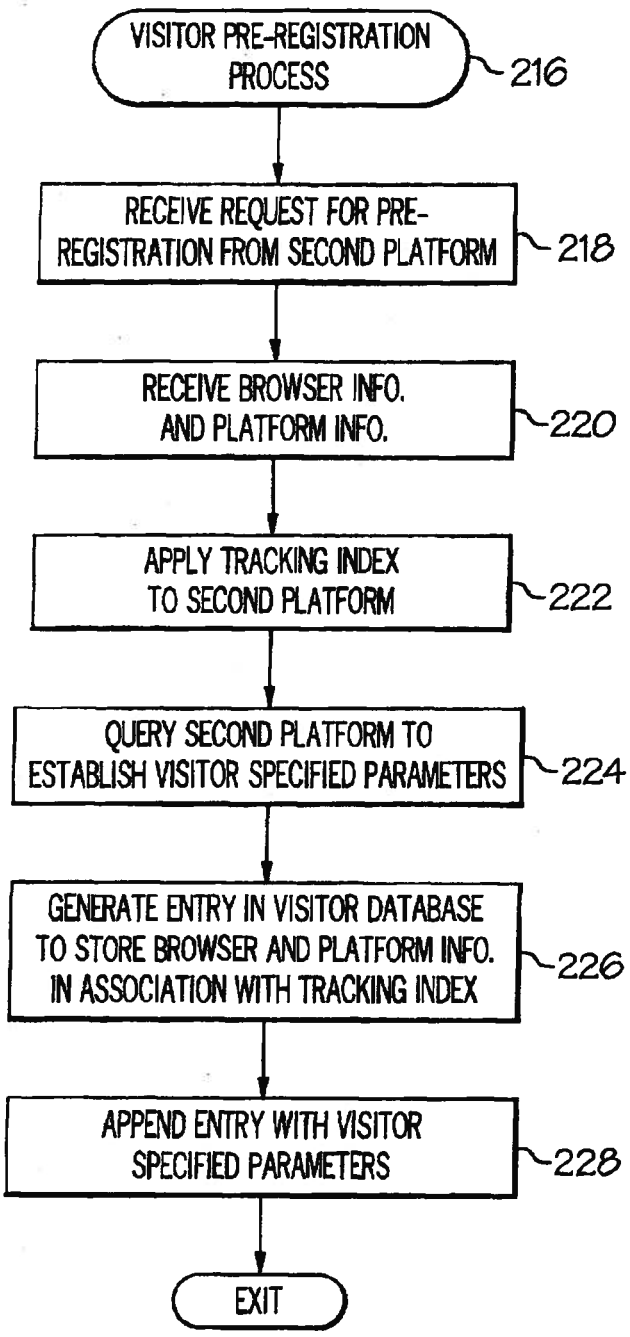

VISITOR PRE-REGISTRATION PROCESS
216
RECEIVE REQUEST FOR PRE-REGISTRATION FROM SECOND PLATFORM
218
RECEIVE BROWSER INFO. AND PLATFORM INFO.
220
APPLY TRACKING INDEX TO SECOND PLATFORM
222
QUERY SECOND PLATFORM TO ESTABLISH VISITOR SPECIFIED PARAMETERS
224
GENERATE ENTRY IN VISITOR DATABASE TO STORE BROWSER AND PLATFORM INFO. IN ASSOCIATION WITH TRACKING INDEX
226
APPEND ENTRY WITH VISITOR SPECIFIED PARAMETERS
228
EXIT

FIG. 10

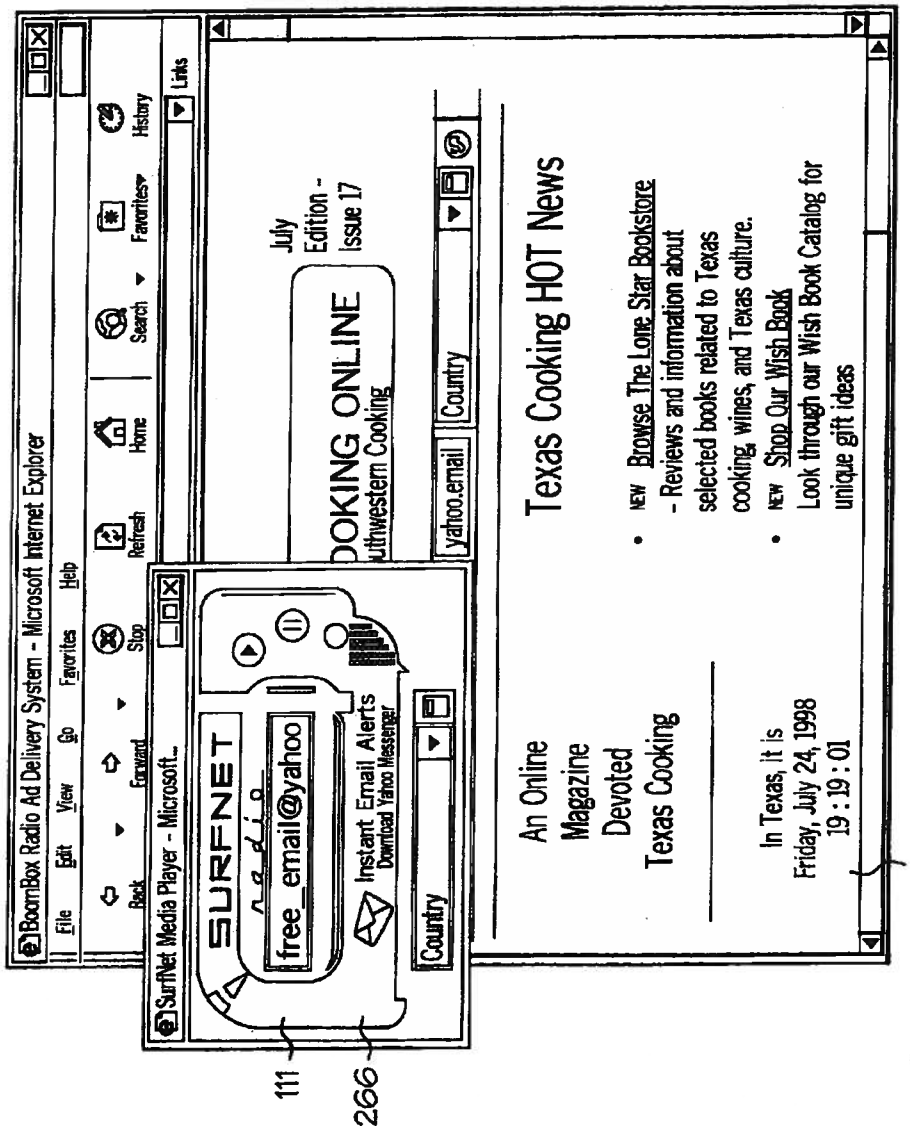

BoomBox Radio Ad Delivery System - Microsoft Internet Explorer
File Edit View Go Favorites Help
Back Forward Stop Refresh Home Search Favorites History Links
SurfNet Media Player - Microsoft...
SURFNET radio
free_email@yahoo
Instant Email Alerts
Download Yahoo Messenger
Country
July
Edition -
Issue 17
DOKING ONLINE
uthwestern Cooking
yahoo.email
Country
Texas Cooking HOT News
An Online
Magazine
Devoted
Texas Cooking
NEW Browse The Lone Star Bookstore
- Reviews and information about
selected books related to Texas
cooking, wines, and Texas culture.
NEW Shop Our Wish Book
Look through our Wish Book Catalog for
unique gift ideas
In Texas, it is
Friday, July 24, 1998
19 : 19 : 01
111
266
34
48

FIG. 11

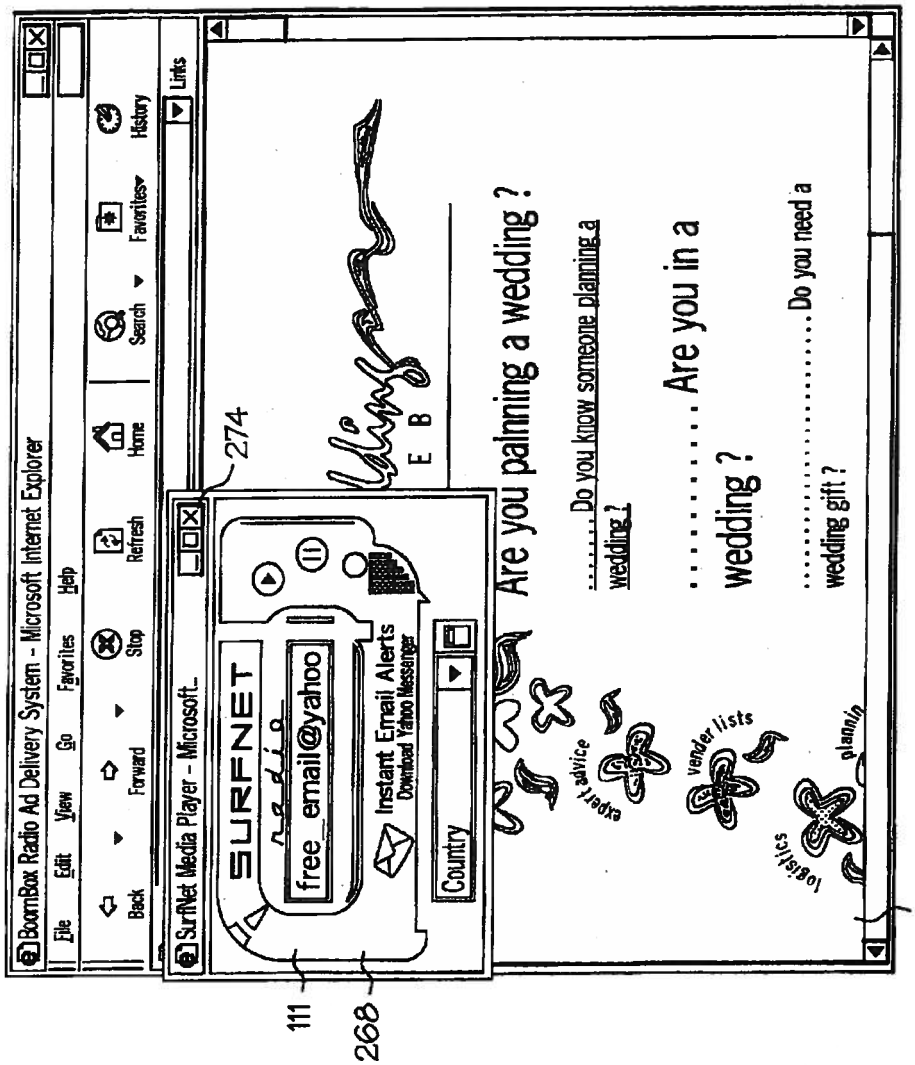

BoomBox Radio Ad Delivery System - Microsoft Internet Explorer
File Edit View Go Favorites Help
Back Forward Stop Refresh Home Search Favorites History
Links
SurfNet Media Player - Microsoft...
SURFNET
radio
free_email@yahoo
Instant Email Alerts
Download Yahoo Messenger
Country
274
111
268
Are you palnning a wedding ?
.....Do you know someone planning a wedding ?
.....Are you in a wedding ?
.....Do you need a wedding gift ?
expert advice
vender lists
logistics
planning
270

FIG. 12

METHOD AND SYSTEM FOR ADDING FUNCTION TO A WEB PAGE

TECHNICAL FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to the field of computer networks. More specifically, the present invention relates to methods and systems for adding function to Web pages that are accessible through the Internet.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The worldwide network of computers commonly referred to as the "Internet" has seen explosive growth in the last several years. The Internet is expected to evolve with the adaptation of new forms of interactive technology applied to the basic Internet infrastructure which consists of many elements, not the least of which are the Web browser and Web page.

Groups of Web pages, forming Web sites, are evolving to a high level of sophistication at an staggering rate. Small to large corporations are taking advantage of this trend, and electronic commerce (E-Commerce), that is, business transactions taking place over the Internet is advancing at a rapid pace. It is highly desirable for those who would like to carry out commerce on the Internet to have a very sophisticated Web site that can perform numerous functions and services to an increasingly sophisticated class of Web site visitors. Such Web sites may desirably include such information services as searchable databases for price, stock, shipping, etc.; product information; competitive comparisons, and so forth.

In order for such information services to be successfully communicated to potential customers, it is imperative to garner the interest of large numbers of Internet users. As with more traditional forms of commerce, advertising plays an important role in attracting customers. Accordingly, what is needed is economical, yet effective, advertising and publicity in order to attract the interest of Internet users.

A recent advance in Web site technology is the addition of streaming media, as well as other more sophisticated functional enhancements, to Web sites. The concept of streaming media is defined broadly as audio and video being delivered to a Web site visitor in packets over the Internet. The streaming media can be delivered so quickly that audio sounds and/or graphic images can be heard and seen almost immediately, comparable in quality to commercial, over-the-air radio or television. Some examples of streaming media include banners, informational feeds using a "marquee", audio based commercials, and so forth.

Unfortunately, it is expensive to add such enhancements to Web sites. Bandwidth costs for delivering streaming media may be prohibitively expensive. In addition, there are problems associated with the complexity of producing the streaming media that is to be "broadcast" over the Web sites, and licensing of the streaming media if it is propriety.

A typical example of adding function to a Web site is the addition of an "affiliate" program. An affiliate program, provided by a third party may be desired by the Web site developer to add functionality to their Web site for the purpose of enhancing the appeal of the site or for revenue sharing in which they will receive a percentage of sales. In order to obtain such an affiliate program, the Web site developer may be required to register with the supplier of the affiliate program in order to obtain and execute the affiliate program in connection with his/her Web site. Unfortunately,

such a registration process typically requires the Web site developer to fill out lengthy on-line electronic forms. Such forms may be cumbersome and so frustrating, that filling out such forms leads to their abandonment on the part of the Web site developer. If the Web site developer successfully manages to register, the Web site developer must then wait for the implementing code for the affiliate program to be e-mailed to him/her. Once the Web site developer receives the implementing code, the code is then copied and pasted onto the HyperText Markup Language (HTML) for the Web site where desired.

Unfortunately, universal capability with the Web browsers that subsequently access the Web site with the enhanced function provided by the affiliate program is limited. That is, even though a Web site developer has successfully added the implementing code for the affiliate program, all Web browsers accessing the Web site may not be able to interpret the affiliate program and the Web site visitor may not be able to experience the added function.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

Accordingly, it is an advantage of the present invention that a method and system for adding function to a Web page are provided.

It is another advantage of the present invention that a method and system are provided that are compatible with Web browsers which adhere to the standards for HyperText Transfer Protocol (HTTP).

It is another advantage of the present invention that a method and system are provided that add function to a Web page through an easily distributed software code module.

It is yet another advantage of the present invention that a method and system are provided that deliver services by client demand that are specific to predetermined parameters.

The above and other advantages of the present invention are carried out in one form by a method of operating a computer network to add function to a Web page. The method calls for downloading the Web page at a processor platform. When the Web page is downloaded, automatically executing a first code module embedded in the Web page. The first code module issues a first command to retrieve a second code module, via a network connection, from a server system, and the first code module issues a second command to initiate execution of the second code module at the processor platform.

The above and other advantages of the present invention are carried out in another form by a computer readable code module for adding function to a Web page. The code module is configured to be embedded in the Web page which is generated in a HyperText Markup Language (HTML), and is configured for automatic execution when the Web page is downloaded to a client machine supporting a graphical user interface and a Web browser. The computer readable code module includes means for communicating a Web address of the Web page to a server system via a network connection to initiate a download of a second computer readable code module to the client machine. The computer readable code module further includes means for communicating first information characterizing said Web browser to said server and means for communicating second information, characterizing said client machine to said server. In addition, the computer readable code module includes means for initiating execution of said second computer readable code module following the download of the second computer readable code module and means for providing a comment tag informing the Web browser to ignore the initiating means.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

A more complete understanding of the present invention may be derived by referring to the detailed description and claims when considered in connection with the Figures, wherein like reference numbers refer to similar items throughout the Figures, and:

FIG. 1 shows a block diagram of a computer network in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. 2 shows an exemplary computer readable code module in accordance with the preferred embodiment of the present invention,

FIG. 3 shows a flow chart of a Web page display process.

FIG. 4 shows an electronic display presenting a Web page including a media appliance metaphor;

FIG. 5 shows a flow chart of a service response provision process;

FIG. 6 shows a registration subprocess of the service response provision process;

FIG. 7 shows a Web address database generated by a server system of the computer network;

FIG. 8 shows a visitor registration subprocess of the service response provision process;

FIG. 9 shows a visitor database generated by the server system of the computer network;

FIG. 10 shows a visitor pre-registration process performed prior to the Web page display process of FIG. 3;

FIG. 11 shows the electronic display presenting the media appliance metaphor detached from the Web page; and

FIG. 12 shows the electronic display presenting another Web page including the media appliance metaphor.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

FIG. 1 shows a block diagram of a computer network **20** in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention. Computer network **20** includes a first processor platform **22**, a second processor platform **24**, and a server system **26**. First processor platform **22**, second processor platform **24**, and server system **26** are connected together via a network **28**. In a preferred embodiment, network **28** is the Internet. However, network **28** can also represent a LAN, a WAN, a wireless cellular network, or a combination of a wireline and wireless cellular network. It should be readily apparent to those skilled in the art that computer network **20** also includes many more processors and server systems which are not shown for the sake of clarity.

First processor platform **22** includes a central processing unit (CPU) **30** and a memory **32**. Memory **32** includes a Web page **34** in which a first code module **36** is embedded. A Web address **38** in memory **32** is associated with Web page **34**. In a preferred embodiment, Web page **34** is generated in HyperText Markup Language (HTML). HTML is the authoring software language used on the Internet's World Wide Web for creating Web pages.

Web address **38** is a Universal Resource Locator (URL), or a string expression used to locate Web page **34** via network **28**. It should be readily apparent to those skilled in the art that first processor platform **22** also includes additional components such as input/output lines, a keyboard and/or mouse, and a display terminal which are not shown for the sake of clarity. In addition, memory **32** also contains additional information, such as application programs, operating systems, data, etc., which also are not shown for the sake of clarity.

Second processor platform **24** includes a CPU **40**, a memory **42**, input/output lines **44**, an input device **46**, such as a keyboard or mouse, a display device **48**, such as a display terminal, and speakers **50**. Memory **42** includes Web browser software **52** and a temporary memory **54**. A first portion of memory **42** is designated for browser information (BROWSER INFO.) **56**, and a second portion of memory **42** is designated for platform information (PLATFORM INFO.) **58**. In addition, a third portion of memory **42** is designated for a tracking index **60**, or cookie, which will be discussed in detail below. Those skilled in the art will understand that memory **42** also contains additional information, such as application programs, operating systems, data, etc., which are not shown in FIG. 1 for the sake of clarity.

Web browser **52** is software which navigates a web of interconnected documents on the World Wide Web via Internet **28**. When a Web site, such as Web page **34**, is accessed through Web address **38**, Web browser **52** moves a copy of Web page **34** into temporary memory **58**. Web browser **52** uses HyperText Transfer Protocol (HTTP) for communicating over Internet **28**. In a preferred embodiment, Web browser **52** supports the HyperText Markup Language 1.0 and the Javascript 1.0 standards, such as Netscape 2.0 and above, Internet Explorer 3.0, and above, and the like.

Browser information **56** is information specific to Web browser **52**. Browser information **56** includes, for example, make and version of Web browser **52**, what plug-ins are currently present, and so forth. Platform information **58** is information specific to second processor platform **24**. Platform information **58** includes, for example, make and version of platform **24**, make and version of the operating system operating on platform **24**, and so forth.

Server system **26** includes a processor (CPU) **62**, a memory **64**, a database structure **66** having a Web address database **68** and a visitor database **70**, and a server structure **72** for accommodating streaming media servers **74** and other media servers **76**. Ports **78** are in communication with server structure **72** and Internet **28** and are used by the Transmission Control Protocol/Internet Protocol (TCP/IP) transport protocol for providing communication across interconnected networks, between computers with diverse hardware architectures, and with various operating systems.

Memory **64** includes Web address database instructions **80**, visitor database instructions **82**, a common gateway interface program **84**, code assembler instructions **86**, and communication instructions **88**. Web address database instructions **80** are executed by processor **62** for maintaining and accessing Web address database **68**. Likewise, visitor database instructions **82** are executed by processor **62** for maintaining and accessing visitor database **70**. CGI interface program **84** executes functions at server system **26** including among other things, checking if Web site **34** is registered. Code assembler instructions **86** are executed by processor **62** to assemble a second code module **90** which is subsequently communicated to second processor platform **24** through the execution of CGI interface program **84** and communication instructions **88**. Second code module **90** is communicated from ports **78** over Internet **28** and downloaded to temporary memory **54** at second processor platform **24**.

FIG. 2 shows an example format of first code module **36** in accordance with the preferred embodiment of the present invention. First code module **36** is generated in HTML and embedded in the HTML of Web page **34** (FIG. 1) when a Web page developer designs Web page **34**. In a preferred embodiment, first code module **36** is generally distributable. That is, first code module **36** may be distributed via Internet

28, and copied and pasted into a Web page during Web page development. First code module 36 executes enough functionality to act as a "bootstrap loader" in order to load second code module 90 (FIG. 1) into temporary memory 54 (FIG. 1) of second processor platform 24 (FIG. 1) for subsequent execution.

A first command line (LINE NO. 1) 92 contains an exemplary initialization for a first command 93, i.e., a script, that will activate a Web address 94 for contacting server system 26 (FIG. 1) and calls CGI program 84 into execution. In addition, first command line 92 communicates Web address 38 to server system 26 via a network connection 96 (FIG. 1) over Internet 28. CGI program 84 executes multiple functions at server system 26. For example, CGI program 84 checks to see whether or not Web page 34 is registered. In addition CGI program 84 initiates the downloading of second code module 90 to second processor platform 24. A second command line (LINE NO. 2) 98 terminates the script started in first command line 92.

A third command line (LINE NO. 3) 100 starts a new script. Third command line 100 also contains a comment tag 102 used to allow Web browser 52 to ignore a fourth command line (LINE NO. 4) 104. Fourth command line 104 contains a second command 106 that initiates execution of second code module 90 that was downloaded to temporary memory 54 of second processor platform 24. A fifth command line 108 terminates comment tag 102 and terminates the script begun on third command line 100.

FIG. 3 shows a flow chart of a Web page display process 110. Web page display process 110 is performed by second processor platform 24 to add function, such as streaming media or other media services to Web page 34 when downloaded to second processor platform 24.

With reference to FIG. 4, FIG. 4 shows display device 48 (FIG. 1) presenting Web page 34 with added function, namely with the added function of a media appliance metaphor 111 in response to the activities carried out in connection with Web page display process 110.

Media appliance metaphor 111 is a software device that exists in the realm of electronic communication and has a counterpart in the real world. When displayed with Web page 34 on display device 48 of second processor platform 24, media appliance metaphor 111 is a graphic representation of something that looks and behaves like a media appliance. In the exemplary embodiment, media appliance metaphor 111 represents a radio image. Other examples of media appliance metaphors include television images, computer images, computer game toy images, and so forth. When applied to Web page 34, media appliance metaphor 111 gives the visitor to Web page 34 the impression that they already know how to use the device because it looks and acts like something that they are already familiar with.

Metaphors take any form desired for which practical programming constraints can be met. This includes, but is not limited to interactive video games, network games, network information appliances such as web based telephones or call centers, and notification service appliances, like beepers. First code module 36 (FIG. 1) used to apply the metaphor on a Web page is a universal program interface, and acts as a bootstrap loader capable of retrieving and executing programs suitable for such a purpose.

Although the present invention is described in connection with the presentation of media appliance metaphor 111 as applied to Web page 34, it need not be limited to such a media appliance metaphor. Rather, first code module 36 (FIG. 2) can be embedded in a Web page to be executed by a visiting processor platform in order to execute other code modules not associated with media appliance metaphors.

With reference back to FIG. 3, Web page display process 110 begins with a task 112. Task 112 causes Web browser 52 to download Web page 34 at second processor platform 24. In other words, Web browser 52 moves a copy of Web page 34, with the embedded first code module 36 into temporary memory 54 (FIG. 1) of second processor platform 24.

When Web page 34 is downloaded at second processor platform 24 in task 112, a task 114 is performed. Task 114 causes Web browser 52 to automatically execute first code module 36 embedded in Web page 34, a copy of which is now stored in temporary memory 54.

Following task 114, a task 116 is performed. At task 116, first code module 36 executes first command line 92 (FIG. 2) to retrieve second code module 90 by issuing first command 93 to activate Web address 94, contact server system 26 (FIG. 1), and call CGI program 84 into execution.

A task 118 is performed in connection with task 116. Task 118 causes second processor platform 24 to communicate Web address 38 to server system 26 through the execution of first command line 92, as discussed previously.

Next, a task 120 is performed. Like task 118, task 120 causes second processor platform 24 to communicate browser information 56 (FIG. 1) and platform information 58. (FIG. 1), through the execution of first command line 92, to server system 26. Following task 120, second processor platform 24 performs additional activities (not shown) pertinent to the downloading and presentation of Web page 34 on display device 48 (FIG. 1). Furthermore, as indicated by ellipses following task 120, and relevant to display process 110, second processor platform 24 awaits communication from server system 26 before display process 110 can proceed.

FIG. 5 shows a flow chart of a service response provision process 122 performed by server system 26 (FIG. 1) in response to display process 110 (FIG. 3). Process 122 begins with a task 124. Task 124 causes processor 62 (FIG. 1) of server system 26 to receive first command 93 (FIG. 3).

In response to receipt of first command 93 in task 124, a task 126 is performed. At task 126, server system 26 receives Web address 38 communicated by second processor platform 24 at task 118 (FIG. 3) of display process 110 (FIG. 3).

Following task 126, a query task 128 is performed. At query task 128, server system 26 determines if Web page 34 located by Web address 38 is previously registered. That is, processor 62 executes a portion of Web address database instructions 80 to access Web address database 68 in order to locate an entry in Web address database 68 corresponding to Web address 38.

When processor 62 determines that there is no entry in Web Address database 68 for Web address 38, process 122 proceeds to a task 130. Task 130 causes processor 62 of server system 26 to perform a registration subprocess.

FIG. 6 shows a registration subprocess 132 performed in response to task 130 of service response provision process 122 (FIG. 4). Registration subprocess 132 is performed by server system 26 to register Web page 34 with the controlling entity of server system 26. In addition, registration subprocess 132 is performed to determine a service response (discussed below) for Web page 34.

Registration subprocess 132 is performed automatically the first time that Web page 34 is downloaded at a processor platform. Desirably, registration subprocess 132 is invoked immediately following the design of Web page 34 by a Web

page developer. For example, following the design of Web page **34**, the Web page developer may download Web page **34** at a processor platform to review the graphical, textual, and audio content of Web page **34** before Web page **34** becomes generally accessible by visitors.

When query task **128** determines that there is no entry in Web address database **68** for Web address **38** (FIG. **1**), server system **26** may schedule a time to perform registration subprocess **132**. Alternatively, registration subprocess **132** may be performed at task **130** (FIG. **4**) immediately upon acknowledgment that there is no entry in Web address database **68** (FIG. **1**).

Registration subprocess **132** begins with a task **134**. Task **134** causes server system **26** (FIG. **1**) to retrieve Web page **34**. Task **134** may also causes server system **26** to retrieve Web pages (not shown) that are nested in association with Web page **34**.

In response to task **134**, a task **136** is performed. Task **136** causes processor **62** of server system **26** execute a portion of Web address database instructions **80** to extract information content of Web page **34**. The information content of Web page **34** is derived from all characters and words that are written on Web page **34**, and that are publicly accessible. The information content may then be reduced by extracting informational metatags, or HTML tags, embedded in Web page **34** that are used to specify information about Web page **34**. In particular, the "keyword" and "description" metatags usually contain words and description information that accurately describe Web page **34**. Other informational content which may be extracted are links, other URLs, domain names, domain name extensions (such as com, .edu., .jp, .uk, etc.), and so forth.

Following task **136**, a task **138** is performed. Task **138** causes processor **62** to archive the information content described in connection with task **136**.

In response to extraction task **136** and archival task **138**, a task **140** is performed. Task **140** causes processor **62** (FIG. **1**) executing Web address database instructions **80** to produce a particular "signature" or profile of Web page **34**. This profile is important for determining the nature of the interest by a visitor using second processor platform **24** to display Web page **34** from whence the profile is produced in order to perform a service response (discussed below) related to the profile.

Following task **140**, a query task **142** is performed. Query task **142** determines whether or not Web page **34** can be registered. Processor **62** (FIG. **1**) may determine that Web page **34** cannot be registered if the information content of Web page **34** is objectionable or otherwise unacceptable to be displayed with added function, i.e., media appliance metaphor **111** (FIG. **4**). When query task **142** determines that Web page **34** is not to be registered, subprocess **132** proceeds to a task **144**.

Task **144** causes processor **62** (FIG. **2**) to form a service response indicating a denial of service. In a preferred embodiment, a desired service response is media appliance metaphor **111** functioning to provide streaming media, in this case music, along with Web page **34**. However, with respect to task **144**, the service response indicating denial of service may be the media appliance metaphor **111** having a slash through it. Alternatively, the service response may simply be an absence of any media appliance metaphor. Following task **144**, subprocess **132** proceeds to a task **146**.

Referring to FIG. **7** in connection with task **146**, FIG. **7** shows Web address database **68** of server system **26** (FIG. **1**). Web address database **68** includes as a minimum, a Web address field **150**, a Web page profile field **152**, a service response field **154**, and a parameter set field **156**. Task **146** (FIG. **6**) causes processor **62** (FIG. **1**) to generate an entry, for example, a first exemplary entry **158**, in Web address database **68**. Web address field **150** is designated for a Web address, or URL. Profile field **152** contains the profile of the Web address produced in task **140** (FIG. **6**) of registration subprocess **132**. Service response field **154** is designated for a service response, and parameter set field **156** is designated for parameters used to assemble second code module **90** having the desired service response.

First entry **158** generated in response to task **144** (FIG. **6**) includes Web address **38** identified simply as URL **1** in Web address field **150**, a profile **160** in profile field **152** associated with URL **1** indicates Web page **34** as being directed toward RECREATION/GOLF. A service response **162** related to profile **160** indicating a denial of service is stored in service response field **154** for entry **158**, and a denial content parameter set **164** associated with service response **162** are used to form an audible, visual, or other presentation of denial service response **162**.

Referring back to query task **142** (FIG. **6**) of registration subprocess **132**, when query task **142** determines that Web page **34** is registered, subprocess **132** proceeds to a query task **166**. At query task **166**, processor **62** (FIG. **1**) may execute a portion of Web address database instructions **80** to determine if a service response for Web page **34** is to be customized. That is, the Web page developer of Web page **34** has the option of customizing media appliance metaphor **111** (FIG. **4**). Such customization may include, but is not limited to music formats tailored to fit the profile, or personality, of Web page **34**, the appearance of metaphor **111**, the names and formats of the radio channels, the banners that are displayed, the specific type of informational feeds, and so forth.

When processor **62** determines that the service response is to be customized, subprocess **132** proceeds to a task **168**. At task **168**, processor **62** (FIG. **1**) establishes a parameter set for customization of media appliance metaphor **111** to be applied to Web page **34**. The custom metaphor is defined by the parameter set. Establishment of the parameter set may be performed through a query exercise performed between server system **26** and the Web page developer of Web page **34**. Customization can include references to commercials targeted to Web page **34**, custom configuration data, custom Web page metaphor preferences, Web page owner preferences, and so forth.

In response to task **168**, a task **170** is performed. Task **170** causes processor **62** to form a service response indicating conditional service, i.e., presentation of media appliance metaphor **111** that has been customized as a result of the activities associated with task **168**. Following task **170**, registration subprocess **132** proceeds to task **146** for generation of an entry in Web address database **68** (FIG. **7**) to store the service response in association with the Web address.

Referring momentarily to FIG. **7**, Web address database **68** includes a second exemplary entry **172**. Second entry **172** generated in response to task **170** (FIG. **6**) includes a Web address **38** in Web address field **150** identified simply as URL **2**. A profile **174** in profile field **152** associated with URL **2** indicates Web page **34** as being directed toward TEXAS COOKING. A service response **176** related to profile **174** indicating conditional service is stored in service response field **154** for entry **172**, and a conditional content parameter set **178** associated with conditional service

response 176 is used to form an audible, visual, or other presentation of conditional service response 176.

With reference back to registration subprocess 132 (FIG. 6), when processor 62 determines at query task 166 the service response is not to be customized, registration subprocess 132 proceeds to a task 180. Task 180 causes processor 62 to form a service response indicating a predetermined, or default, service. Such a service response is determined by the entity controlling server system 26 (FIG. 1). In task 180, the controlling entity can determine the look and feel of media appliance metaphor 111 (FIG. 4), the particular audio format to be used with media appliance metaphor 111, for example a particular music type, the controls available to a visitor to Web page 34, and so forth.

Following task 180, subprocess 132 proceeds to task 146 where an entry is generated in Web address database 68 (FIG. 7) to store the service response in association with the web address. Again referring to Web address database 68 (FIG. 7), Web address database 68 includes a third exemplary entry 182. Third entry 182, generated in response to task 180 (FIG. 6), includes Web address 38 in Web address field 150 identified simply as URL 3. A profile 184 in profile field 152 associated with URL 3 indicates Web page 34 as being directed toward WEDDING. A service response 186 indicating a predetermined service is stored in service response field 154 for entry 182, and a predetermined content parameter set 188 associated with service response 186 is used to form an audible, visual, or other presentation of predetermined service response 186.

Following task 146 and the formation of service response 162 indicating denial of service, the formation of service response 176 indicating conditional service, or the formation of service response 186 indicating predetermined service, Web page 34 is registered, and subprocess 132 exits.

Referring back to service response provision process 122 (FIG. 5) following task 130 in which registration subprocess 132 (FIG. 6) has been performed, or when query task 128 determines that Web page 34 (FIG. 1) identified by Web address 38 (FIG. 1) has been previously registered, provision process 122 continues with a task 190.

Task 190 causes processor 62 (FIG. 1) to receive browser information 56 (FIG. 1) and platform information 58 (FIG. 1) from second processor platform 24 (FIG. 1). As discussed previously, browser information 56 includes, for example, make and version of Web browser 52, what plug-ins are currently present, and so forth. Platform information 58 includes, for example, make and version of platform 24, make and version of the operating system operating on platform 24, and so forth.

In response to task 190, a query task 192 is performed. Query task 192 causes processor 62 to execute a portion of visitor database instructions 82 (FIG. 1) to determine if there is an entry in visitor database 70 related to browser information 56 and platform information 58. When query task 192 determines that there is no entry in visitor database 70, indicating that a user of second processor platform 24 has not previously downloaded a Web page containing first code module 36, provision process 122 proceeds to a task 194.

Task 194 causes processor 62 to further execute visitor database instructions 82 to perform a visitor registration subprocess. FIG. 8 shows a visitor registration subprocess 196 of service response provision process 122. Visitor registration subprocess 196 is performed for tracking visitors to Web page 34. Visitor registration subprocess 196 generates visitor database 70 containing visitor demographics and interests that may be useful for targeting advertising and tailoring added function to Web pages.

Visitor registration subprocess 196 begins with a task 198. Task 198 causes server system 26 (FIG. 1) to apply tracking index 60 to second processor platform 24 via network connection 96. Tracking index 60, also known as a cookie, is a feature of HTTP that allows the entity controlling server system 26 to place information in memory 42 (FIG. 1) of second processor platform 24. Tracking index 60 allows server system 26 to both store and retrieve information on second processor platform 24. Tracking index 60 is persistent, meaning it remains in memory 42 (FIG. 1) of second processor platform 24 for subsequent use by server system 26. Since tracking index 60 is persistent, tracking index 60 can be used by server system 26 to track a visitor, using second processor platform 24, to any Web page that has embedded therein first code module 36.

In connection with task 198, a task 200 is performed. Task 200 causes processor 62 (FIG. 1) to generate an entry in visitor database 70 to store browser information 56 and platform information 58 in association with tracking index 60. Following task 200, visitor registration subprocess exits.

FIG. 9 shows visitor database 70 generated by server system 26 of computer network 20. Visitor database 70 includes as a minimum, a tracking index field 202, a browser ID field 204, a platform ID field 206, and a visitor preferences field 208. Task 200 (FIG. 8) causes processor 62 (FIG. 1) to generate a visitor database entry 210, in visitor database 70. Tracking index field 202 is designated for a tracking index, or cookie, such as tracking index 60 identifying second processor platform 24. Browser ID field 204 contains browser information 56 received in task 190 (FIG. 5) of provision process 122. Likewise, platform ID field 206 is designated for platform information 58 received in task 190. Visitor preferences field 208 is designated for an optional visitor specified parameter set 212 assembled in response to a visitor pre-registration process (discussed below).

Referring back to service response provision process 122 (FIG. 5), following task 194 in which visitor registration subprocess 196 is performed or when query task 192 determines that entry 210 (FIG. 9) is present in visitor database 70, process 122 proceeds to a query task 214.

Query task 214 determines if entry 210 includes visitor specified parameter set 212. As mentioned previously, visitor specified parameter set 212 may be present if second processor platform has previously performed a visitor pre-registration process.

FIG. 10 shows a visitor pre-registration process 216 performed prior to invoking Web page display process 110 (FIG. 3). Visitor pre-registration process 216 may be performed by a user of second processor platform 24 (FIG. 1) via an access account (not shown). Visitor pre-registration process 216 allows users to have some preference control over any added function, such as media appliance metaphor 111 (FIG. 4) that they may encounter when downloading Web pages having first code module 36 embedded therein.

Visitor pre-registration process 216 begins with a task 218. Task 218 causes processor 62 (FIG. 1) of server system 26 to receive a request (not shown) to pre-register from second processor platform 24. Such a request may be received over a communication link, such as network connection 96, via Internet 28, following the assignment of an access account to second processor platform 24.

In connection with task 218, a task 220 is performed. Task 220 causes processor 62 to receive browser information 56 and platform information 58 from second processor platform 24 via network connection 96.

Following task 220, a task 222 is performed. In a manner similar to task 198 of visitor registration process 196 (FIG.

8), server system 26 applies a tracking index or cookie, such as tracking index 60, to second processor platform 24.

Next a task 224 is performed. In task 224, processor 62 and second processor platform 24 perform an interactive process to obtain visitor specified parameters for establishing visitor specified parameter set 212 (FIG. 9). Such visitor specified parameters may include, for example, the appearance of specified metaphors, specific audio channels, format preferences, such as location on the Web page, size, color, and so forth.

Following task 224, a task 226 is performed. Task 226 causes processor 62, through the execution of visitor database instructions 82 (FIG. 1), to generate an entry, such as entry 210 (FIG. 9) in visitor database 70 to store browser information 56 and platform information 58 in association with tracking index 60.

In addition a task 228 is performed in connection with task 226. Task 228 causes processor 62, executing visitor database instructions 82, to append entry 210 with visitor specified parameter set 212, as illustrated in visitor database 70 (FIG. 9). Following task 228, visitor pre-registration process 216 exits.

Referring back to query task 214 of service response provision process 122 (FIG. 5), when processor 62 determines that entry 210 (FIG. 9) includes visitor specified parameter set 212 obtained through the execution of visitor pre-registration process 216 (FIG. 10), process 122 proceeds to a task 230.

Task 230 causes processor 62 to access Web address database 68 to amend a service response in service response field 154 (FIG. 7) to indicate a visitor specified conditional service is to be provided for second processor platform 24. Referring momentarily to Web address database 68 (FIG. 7), database 68 includes a fourth exemplary entry 232 for a Web address 38 identified simply as URL 4 in Web address field 150, a profile 234 in profile field 152 associated with URL 4 indicates Web page 34 as being directed toward FOOTBALL. Service response 186 indicating predetermined service is entered in service response field 154 for fourth entry 232, and predetermined content set 188 associated with service response 186 is entered in parameter set field 156.

In response to task 230, service response field 154 also includes a flag 236 associated with tracking index 60 indicating that predetermined service response 186 is amended to conditional service response 176 for second platform 24. Flag 236 indicates to processor 62 to access visitor preferences field 208 (FIG. 9) of visitor database 70 for visitor specified parameter set 212. Although, fourth exemplary entry 232 is shown having a predetermined service response 186, it should be readily understood that the service response may be a conditional response 176 (FIG. 7) in which the Web page designer has customized metaphor 111 (FIG. 4) during registration subprocess 132 (FIG. 6).

With reference back to process 122 (FIG. 5) following task 230 or when query task 214 determines that entry 210 (FIG. 9) of visitor database 70 does not include visitor specified; parameter set 212, process 122 proceeds to a task 238.

Task 238 causes processor 62 to execute code assembler instructions 86 (FIG. 1) to assemble second code module 90. Second code module 90 is assembled by accessing the predetermined one of denial of service response 162 (FIG. 7), conditional service response 176 (FIG. 7), and predetermined service response 186 (FIG. 7) from Web address database 68. In addition, second code module 90 is assembled in response to browser information 56 and platform information 58. In other words, second code module 90 is assembled to include the service response and to work with any combination of browser/platform systems.

This feature eliminates the need for an affiliate program to be hard coded, installed onto Web page 34, then tested and debugged by programmers. In addition, since second code module 90 is assembled in response to browser information 56, second code module 90 is compatible with Web browser 52 (FIG. 1) used by second processor platform 24 (FIG. 1).

Second code module 90 may also include another Web address 240, represented in parameter set field 156 of second entry 175 of Web address database 68 (FIG. 7). In this exemplary scenario, the media source (audio, video, graphics, banners, informational feed, etc.) originates from a platform (not shown) connected through Internet 28 (FIG. 1) whose location is specified by Web address 240.

Following assembly of second code module 90 in task 238, a task 242 is performed by server system 26. Task 242 causes processor 62 through the execution of CGI program 84 (FIG. 1), to communicate second code module 90 to second processor platform 24 via network connection 96. In addition, through the execution of communication instructions 88 (FIG. 1) and the execution of appropriate command and control protocols, processor 62 manages servers 72 (FIG. 1) in order to direct information content from the media source having Web address 240 to second processor platform 24.

Referring to Web page display process 110 (FIG. 3), display process 110 performs a task 244. Task 244 is complementary to task 242 of provision process 122. That is, as server system 26 communicates second code module 90 to second processor platform 24, task 244 causes platform 24 to receive, via network connection 96 (FIG. 1), second code module 90. Second code module is subsequently stored in temporary memory 54 (FIG. 1) of second processor platform 24.

Following receipt of second code module 90, process 110 proceeds to a task 246. Task 246 causes Web browser 52 (FIG. 1) to execute third command line 100 (FIG. 2) of first code module 36 containing comment tag 102. In addition, task 246 causes Web browser 52 to execute fourth command line 104 (FIG. 2) of first code module 36 issuing second command 106 to initiate the execution of second code module 90.

In response to issuing second command 106 in task 246, a task 248 is performed. Task 248 causes Web browser 52 to execute second code module 90.

In response to task 248, a task 250 is performed. Task 250 causes media appliance metaphor 111 (FIG. 4) to be applied to Web page 34 for display at display device 48 (FIG. 1). Of course, as discussed previously, if the service response is denial of service response 162, media appliance metaphor 111 may be presented with a slash through it or may be absent from Web page 34.

Referring to FIG. 4, the service response is media appliance metaphor 111 presenting a radio image. Through media appliance metaphor 111, streaming audio in the form of a radio channel 252 playing country music is provided and presented through speakers 50 (FIG. 1). Country radio channel 252 enhances the appeal of Web page 34 through an audio experience that compliments Web page 34 whose information content involves Texas Cooking. In connection with music provided through radio channel 252, commercials may be aired that are related to the information content of Web page 34. Such commercials may include content relevant to Texas cooking, for example, food items, antacids,

barbecues, and so forth. Thus, metaphor **111** is able to deliver targeted advertising to a visitor accessing Web page **34**.

Metaphor **111** also includes additional controls. For example, a drop down menu **254** is provided for selection of a different radio channel. In addition, a control button **256** allows a user to forward and reverse radio channel **252**, another control button **258** allows a user to play or pause radio channel **252**, and a volume slide **260** allows a user to adjust the volume of radio channel **252**. An arrow image **262** included in metaphor **111** activates a portable mode (discussed below).

In response to the display of metaphor **111** in task **250**, a query task **264** is performed. Query task **264** causes second processor platform **24**, operating through Web browser **52**, to determine if a command is detected to detach metaphor **111** from Web page **34** in order to activate a portable mode. A portable mode may be selected when a user clicks on arrow image **262**. When task **252** determines that the portable mode has been selected process **110** proceeds to a task **266**.

Task **266** causes second processor platform **24** to display metaphor **111**, in a portable mode, on a refreshed display. FIG. **11** shows electronic display **48** presenting media appliance metaphor **111** detached from the Web page **34** and appearing in a portable mode **268**. In an exemplary embodiment, when arrow image **262** is clicked, metaphor **111** changes in appearance to portable mode **268**. This change of appearance may reflect a predetermined response by server system **26** or visitor specified preferences set in visitor pre-registration process **216** (FIG. **10**).

FIG. **12** shows electronic display **48** presenting a new Web page **270** downloaded at second processor platform **24** and including media appliance metaphor **111** in portable mode **268**. Thus, although Web page **34** (FIG. **11**) is no longer being display on electronic display **48**, a user of second processor platform is still able to enjoy the information content supplied by metaphor **111**.

Following task **266** and when query task **264** determines that metaphor **111** is not to be detached from Web page **34**, a query task **272** is performed. Query task **272** determines if display of metaphor **111** is to be terminated. Metaphor **111** may be terminated when a user of second processor platform **24** does not detach metaphor **111** from Web page **34** and downloads a subsequent. Web page. In another exemplary scenario, second processor platform **24** may be voluntarily or involuntarily disconnected from server system **26** through the execution of fifth command line **108** (FIG. **2**) of first code module **36** terminating second command **106** (FIG. **2**). In yet another exemplary scenario, metaphor **111** may be terminated when in portable mode **268** by clicking on the close window control, such as an X symbol **274** (FIG. **12**).

When query task **272** determines that metaphor **111** is not to be terminated, program control loops back to task **250** to continue display of metaphor **111**. However, when query task **272** determines that metaphor **111** is to be terminated process **110** proceeds to a task **276**.

Task **276** causes second processor platform **24** to discontinue the display of metaphor **111** on display device **48**. Following task **276**, process **110** exits.

Referring to service response provision process **122** (FIG. **5**), processor **62** (FIG. **1**) of server system **26** performs query task **278**. Query task **278** is complementary to query task **272** of display process **110**. That is, processor **62** monitors for the termination of metaphor **111** in query task **272** and determines at query task **278** whether service should continue.

Communication instructions **88** (FIG. **1**) executed by processor **62** includes a timing parameter, or clock, (not shown) that is started to allow for a continuous periodic check for continuation of service. In query task **278**, when service is to continue, process **122** proceeds to a task **280**. Task **280** causes server system **26**, through the continued execution of communication instructions **88** at processor **62**, to continue directing streaming media associated with metaphor **111** to second processor platform **24**. Following task **280**, process **122** loops back to query task **278** to continue the periodic check for continuation of service.

When query task **278** determines that service is to be discontinued, process **122** proceeds to a task **282**. Task **282** causes server system **26** to terminate services. That is, task **282** causes server system **26** to discontinue directing streaming media associated with metaphor **111** to second processor platform **24**. Following task **282**, process **122** exits.

In summary, the present invention teaches of a method and system for adding function, such as streaming media or other media services to a Web page, through the implementation of a simple code module embedded in the HTML of the Web page. The code module is compatible with Web browsers which adhere to the standards for HyperText Transfer Protocol (HTTP) because it is implemented using a common subset of the current HTML standard command set. In addition, the code module is easily distributed through the Internet, and is readily copied and pasted into a Web page during Web page development activities, and undergoes automatic execution and registration with minimal effort by the Web page developer. The present invention is able to tailor the added function based on information about the Web page in which it is embedded and based on visitor specified preferences.

Although the preferred embodiments of the invention have been illustrated and described in detail, it will be readily apparent to those skilled in the art that various modifications may be made therein without departing from the spirit of the invention or from the scope of the appended claims. The specification and drawings are, accordingly, to be regarded in an illustrative rather than restrictive sense. Furthermore, although the present invention is described in connection with a media appliance metaphor for providing streaming audio, this is not intended to be limiting. For example, the metaphor may providing streaming video and other multimedia communication formats.

What is claimed is:

1. A method of operating a computer network to add function to a Web page comprising the steps of:

downloading said Web page at a processor platform, said downloading step being performed by a Web browser;

when said Web page is downloaded, automatically executing a first code module embedded in said Web page;

said first code module issuing a first command to retrieve a second code module, via a network connection, from a server system;

receiving, at said server system, first information characterizing said Web browser in response to said executing step;

receiving, at said server system, second information characterizing said processor platform in response to said executing step;

storing said first and said second information in a visitor database of said server system, said first and said second information being associated with a tracking index; assembling, at said server system, said second

code module, said second code module containing a service response related to said Web page; said second code module being responsive to said first and second information;

downloading, in response to said first command, said code module to said processor platform; and

said first code module issuing a second command to initiate execution of said second code module at said processor platform.

2. A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein said Web browser employs HyperText Transfer Protocol (HTTP) and said first code module is generated in a HyperText Markup Language (HTML).

3. A method as claimed in claim 2 wherein said Web page is generated in said HTML, and said first code module includes a comment tag informing said Web browser to ignore said second command.

4. A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein said method further comprises the steps performed by said server system of:

receiving a Web address of said Web page;

determining if said Web page is registered with said server system; and

when said Web page is not registered, performing a registration of said Web page.

5. A method as claimed in claim 4 wherein said performing step comprises the steps of:

receiving said Web page at said server system;

extracting informational content of said Web page;

archiving said informational content of said Web page; and

producing a profile of said Web page in response to said extracting and archiving steps.

6. A method as claimed in claim 5, wherein said service response is related to said profile of said Web page, further comprising the steps of:

storing said service response in association with said Web address;

accessing said service response when said first code module issues said first command.

7. A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein said second code module includes a service response indicating a denial of service.

8. A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein said second code module includes a service response indicating a conditional service.

9. A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein said second code module includes a service response indicating a predetermined service.

10. A method as claimed in claim 1 further comprising the steps of:

applying said tracking index to said processor platform in response to said first and second information; and

using said tracking index at said server system to track and identify said processor platform.

11. A method as claimed in claim 10 further comprising the steps of:

appending visitor specified parameters to a visitor database entry for said first and said second information associated with said tracking index;

executing said second code module in response to said second command; and

presenting, at said processor platform, a service response having a conditional service characterized by said visitor specified parameters.

12. A method as claimed in claim 11 wherein prior to said downloading step, said method further comprises the steps of:

registering said first and second information characterizing said Web browser and said processor platform in said visitor database; and

establishing said visitor specified parameters.

13. A method as claimed in claim 1 further comprising the steps of:

executing said second code module in response to said second command; and

presenting a service response upon execution of said second code module.

14. A method as claimed in claim 13 wherein said service response is a metaphor, and said method further comprises the step of displaying said metaphor in connection with said Web page on said processor platform.

15. A method as claimed in claim 14 further comprising the step of customizing said metaphor to include a parameter set relevant to said Web page, said customized metaphor describing a conditional service presented upon execution of said second code module.

16. A method as claimed in claim 14 further comprising the steps of:

detaching said metaphor from said Web page; and

displaying said metaphor disassociated from said Web page.

17. A method as claimed in claim 13 further comprising the step of terminating said presenting step upon detection, at said server system, of a terminate service response indicator from said processor platform.

18. A method as claimed in claim 1 further comprising the steps of:

executing said second code module in response to said second command, said second code module including a Web address for a second Web page;

downloading information content from said second Web page at said processor platform; and

presenting said information content in a service response at said processor platform.

19. A computer readable code module for adding function to a Web page, said code module configured to be embedded in said Web page generated in a HyperText Markup Language (HTML) and configured for automatic execution when said Web page is downloaded to a client machine supporting a graphical user interface and a Web browser, said computer readable code module including:

means for communicating a Web address of said Web page to a server system via a network connection to initiate a download of a second computer readable code module to said client machine;

means for communicating first information characterizing said Web browser to said server system;

means for Communicating second information characterizing said client machine to said server system; means for assembling, at said server system, said second computer readable code module, said second computer readable code module containing a service response related to said Web page, said second computer readable code module being responsive to said first and second information;

means for downloading said second computer readable code module to said client machine;

means for initiating execution of said second computer readable code module following said download of said second computer readable code module; and

means for providing a comment tag informing said Web browser to ignore said initiating means.

20. A computer readable code module as claimed in claim 19 wherein said code module is generated in said HTML.

21. A computer network comprising a first processor platform for maintaining a Web page accessible through a Web address, said Web page including a first code module embedded therein, and a second processor platform in communication with said first processor platform via a network connection, said second processor platform supporting a Web browser, said Web browser being configured to download said Web page and execute said first code module, wherein:

said first code module issues a first command to retrieve a second code module; and

said computer network further comprises a server system in communication with said second processor platform for receiving said first command, said server system including:

a database having stored therein a service response in association with said Web address;

a processor, in communication with said database, for assembling said second code module having said service response; and

means for communicating said second code module to said second processor platform, such that upon retrieving said second code module, said first code module issues a second command to initiate execution of said second code module at said second processor platform.

22. A computer network as claimed in claim 21 wherein said server system further comprises a memory element accessible by said processor, said memory element having instructions stored therein which, when executed by said processor, cause said processor to access said database to locate an entry in said database for said Web address, and when said entry is absent, said instructions cause said processor to receive said Web page, extract informational content of said Web page, archive said informational content in said database, and produce a profile of said Web page.

23. A computer network as claimed in claim 22 wherein said instructions further cause said processor to generate said entry for said Web address in said database, said entry including said service response related to said profile.

24. A computer network as claimed in claim 23 wherein said service response is a metaphor, and said instructions further cause said processor to establish a parameter set in response to said profile, said parameter set defining said metaphor.

25. A computer network as claimed in claim 21 wherein said server system further comprises:

means for receiving, from said second processor platform, first information related to said Web browser and second information related to said second processor platform, said processor being in communication with said receiving means; and

a memory element accessible by said processor, said memory element having instructions stored therein which, when executed by said processor, cause said processor to assemble said second code module in response to said first and second information.

26. A computer network as claimed in claim 21 wherein said server system further comprises:

means for receiving, from said second processor platform, first information related to said Web browser and second information related to said second processor platform, said processor being in communication with said receiving means;

a visitor database; and

a memory element accessible by said processor, said memory element having instructions stored therein which, when executed by said processor, cause said processor to apply a tracking index to said second processor platform for subsequent access by said server system and to generate an entry in said visitor database, said entry including said first and second information related to said tracking index.

27. A computer network as claimed in claim 26 wherein said server system further comprises:

an input element for receiving visitor specified parameters; and

means for amending said entry in said visitor database in response to said visitor specified parameters.

28. A computer network as claimed in claim 21 wherein said service response includes a second Web address for a second Web page, and said second code module includes said second Web address for subsequent download of information content from said second Web page by said Web browser of said second processor platform when said first code module issues said second command.

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